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ABSTRACT

An approach to the teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) that uses Turkish shadow puppetry is described and discussed. The method uses traditional theater characters and contemporary scripts in the form of dialogues and group discussions to provide oral skill practice. The activity has the advantage that even shy students can participate actively since the drama occurs behind a curtain. All equipment and materials, including puppet theater and puppets, come in a set the size of a suitcase. In this form of drama, language is preceded by a movement, and it is suggested that this allows students to think freely and easily and to practice the target language unconsciously and sometimes spontaneously. The approach has been used in the Netherlands for Turkish ethnic minority students to facilitate both native and second language learning, and has yielded good results in all skill areas, but particularly oral skills, in ESL instruction to intermediate-level Turkish students. Data are reported from a survey of teachers concerning the method. A sketch of puppet theater setup is included. (MSE)

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ABSTRACT

DRAMA BEHIND THE CURTAIN ; SHADOW THEATRE in EFL/ ESL CLASSES

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In this Shadow Theatre approach traditional Turkish shadow -theatre characters are employed and contemporary scripts are produced in the form of dialogues and group discussions ,solely, to serve the purpose of EFL/ESL learning at all levels.

The highlight of this project is that even shy pupils have an opportunity to take active part in plays , since dramatization is realized behind a curtain. Each character, projected on the screen is animated by a pupil according to the script, and sticks are used to provide bodily movement for the shadow characters. All the equipment necessary for the portable stage and the major shadow characters come in a set which is just equal to the size of a suitcase.

As the drama involves a kind of motivation process

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in which language is preceded by a movement, the students' minds become so free that ideas flow easily' and smoothly. In this way, the targeted language is practised unconsciously involving real, sometimes spontaneous use of language. This approach has been applied in the Netherlands for the ethnic minority pupils from Turkish background to facilitate their second language learning and the mother tongue as well. And the same method has yielded better results in EFL among a group of intermediate level Turkish students. Pupils instructed via this approach, showed better performance in all the skill areas of the languages taught, especially in speaking. And the attitude of the teachers towards this approach was assessed by administering a questionnaire, to come up with some statistically valid criteria.

INTRODUCTION

A lot has been written and said about the wonders of creative dramatics. Unfortunately, however, there has not been enough simple, practical material developed for the teacher who is not an expert in this special area. The purpose of creative drama is not to produce acting skill but to help children become more aware of life; to view their physical surroundings with delight and develop emphathy toward others and faith and confidence in themselves. Drama, in all its forms, sets in motion a process in which the mind becomes so free that ideas run through it easily and flexibly (Hayes & Via, 1973). However, in most of the cases where drama is used as an educational or instructional tool, shy students usually tend to keep away from taking active part in presentations. Instead, they prefer to be part of the audience. What can be done to make those shy children engage actively in dramatic presentations ? Among others, a good solution could be the introduction of shadow theatre option into the learning situation in EFL/ESL classes, since dramatization takes place behind a curtain. To encourage both teachers and the children in

language classes to make use of shadow theatre, a a set of shadow-theatre material (hardware) must be made available, designed solely for instructional purposes along with some sample scripts and a hand book.

It is known that children seem to learn more quickly when their speech is preceded by language (Hayes & Via 1973). Probably this is because physical movement and dubbing of characters not only brings relaxation, enjoyment, live involvement in the language being practised and individual expression, but also stimulates spontaneous thinking as in real life situations.

This article is intended to provide the spark to get you thinking about how best you might utilize shadow-drama to meet the particular needs of your own students of EFL/ESL classes. You will also find a brief history of the Turkish Shadow Theatre , its main characters, approaches to the EFL/ESL classroom applications and instructions for a do-it-yourself assembly kit . Furthermore, data collected after administering a questionnaire to some of the educational experts who have engaged in teaching elementary school children, in the Netherlands employing this method, will also be presented.

The Origins and the Development of Turkish Shadow Theatre

Shadow theatre is thought to have originated in Far East, having first been recorded in Java, China and India, and came to Turkey on its travels westward. However, some scholars like Berhold Laufer (1915) or Hermann Reich (1903) have claimed that puppet or shadow theatre originated in the Mediterrenean area and spread later to the east, but this theory has been rejected on many grounds, particularly on the ground that there is no record of shadow theatre in ancient Greece or Byzantium. Nowadays it is accepted that it came westward from Asia although there still remains a controversy about which route it came to Turkey.

According to the theory based on Dr.Pischel's thesis, it is ascertained that the home of the puppet-show is India, from whence it is said to have travelled to Europe (Pischel,1900).

Very little is known about Turkish puppets and the difference between puppet and shadow plays. In the past there were four distinct kinds of puppets in Turkey. The first is the 'iskemble kuklasi' (jigging puppet) which was presented by

gyps/street women. The show consisted of from one of four music-box figures with a string passing horizontally through their breasts, strung from an upright post fixed on a small booth or chair. When performers pulled the string , the puppets moved to the music. 'El kuklasi' (hand or glove puppet) and 'ipli kukla' (marionette , worked by strings) are the two other kinds. They are believed to have been introduced to Turkey at the end of the 19th century by an English puppet master, Thomas Holden. Since this kind of puppet was so much identified with Holden, more recent bills of puppet performances still carry his name (And,1975). The fourth kind are the giant puppets. They were huge figures, carried usually in street processions, moved by men concealed inside the puppets, some being made to dance and other belonging to the dramatic aspect of the subject.

One possible route was through Egypt. So let us examine closer the evidence asserting that shadow theatre was borrowed from Egypt in the sixteenth century. Here is the story Sultan Selim I, who incorporated Egypt into Ottoman realm in 1517, commanded the last Sultan of the Mamelukes to be hanged. This order was carried out and Sultan Tumanbay II was hanged on 15th April

1517, at the Bab-i Zuwela. In the palace on Roda Island in the River Nile, Sultan Selim watched a performance of a shadow play, representing the hanging of the Sultan of the Mamelukes with the rope breaking twice during the execution. He took so much delight in the performance that he rewarded the performer with eighty gold coins and an embroidered 'kaftan '(coat) and told the performer " When we go to Istanbul, you will come with us so that my son can see the shadow play, too " His son, who was twenty-one at that time, was later known as Suleiman the Magnificent. This is recorded in Tarih-i Misr (The Egyptan Chronicle) of Muhammed ibn Ahmet ibn Ilyas, who was an eye witness of the events. There is more evidence to effect that Egyptian shadow players were performing in Turkey in the 17th century. When,on 20th June 1612, Ahmet I's sister, Gevherhan, married Okuz Mehmet Pasha, some Egyptian shadow players were invited for the occasion. Among them was the famous Egyptian shadow player, Davud el-atta, whom Sultan Ahmet I, had seen perform in Edirne. This is recorded in Menavi's memories (And,1975).

There are two versions of the legend of the Ottoman origin of Karagoz. According to the first

one, Karagoz and Hacivat, the principle caharacters in every play, were members of the Imperial Court of Orkhan (Orhan I, the second sovereign of the Ottoman Empire). For some unknown reason the sovereign ordered them executed. the favourite of the Sultan, Sheih Kustheri, wishing to move his master to penitence, arranged a puppet show in which he showed on the stage the figures of both victims. According to the second version, Karagoz was a workman engaged in the construction of a mosque in Bursa and Hacivat was a supervisor. They were continually telling jokes, thus diverting the workmen from their work, so that the construction of the mosque was considerably delayed. On the complaint of the architect they were put to death. And Sheih Kushteri reproduced their puppet and made a show to entertain the Sultan who fell into a mood of melancholy due to the execution of these two talented workers (Martinovich, 1968).

Technique and Structure of Shadow Theatre

The name commonly used for the Turkish Shadow Theatre is KARAGOZ. "Kara" and "goz" are two words which mean "black-eyed". This term is used to

refer to the principal character and thus the theatre received its name (Martinovich,1968).

Regarding presentation, the Karagoz stage is separated from the audience by a frame holding a sheet of any white translucent material but preferably fine cotton. It is mounted like painter's canvas, stretched taut on a frame. The size of the screen in the past was 2 m x 2,5 m, in more recent times it has been reduced to 1 m x 0.60.(cm). The operator stands behind the screen, holding the puppets against it using an olive oil lamp as a light source from behind. The puppets are put between the light and the curtain on which their shadows are to be thrown. The screen diffuses the light, and the light shines through the multi-coloured transparent material, making the figures look like stained glass. The puppeteer holds the puppet close against the screen with rods held horizontally and stretch at right angles to the puppet. The figures are flat, clean-cut silhouettes in color. Animal skin is used in the making of the puppets, especially that of the camel and calf.

Advantages of the Shadow-Theatre Approach Over Drama

Use of 'shadow-drama' helps to achieve two goals of EFL/ESL language classes. First, it provides an active approach to the study of English, putting students into situations that require practice in oral communication. Second, it provides an opportunity for the students to use creatively the English they have already learned, presenting them with situations that stimulate imaginative responses. Moreover dramatization of characters behind a curtain provides the teacher with some insights into the assessment of the speaking ability of his/her students. Students will also be monitoring their friends during the performance sometimes taking notes of their conversation. Group discussions and pair work are the essential activities both before and after the animation sessions. This requires teacher-student, student-student interactions at the highest possible level. This is always the best way for eliminating 'affective filter ' on the part of learners.

Dramatic activity by its very nature can make the study and practice of a language interesting, enjoyable and dynamic. In a shadow-theatre performance, the children develop the personal

traits appropriate for the cultural and social activities in the classroom (Gur,1990). Yet, one of the most important aspects of the shadow-theatre is that children animating different characters will never feel embarrassed due to the particular role they are playing; they will not be the direct objects of critics, accusations, and sometimes insulting statements because the characters they are dubbing are merely characters involved in a play. This will give them confidence and will encourage them for conversation without any pressure on them.

Approaches to Classroom Applications

In order to implement the objectives aimed at by the use of shadow-drama, there must be some course material to initiate child participation and learning. Thus, their interests will be stimulated in preparing their own similar materials for using with shadow characters. From the very first session, the teachers's job is to develop a sipirit of cooperation and to encourage the necessary concentration.

First of all, the teacher presents some short scripts, of his/her own, in front of the class

(either by impromptn or reading from a paper). These introductory sessions are of great value in arousing interest in the students, motivating them to take active part by animating the shadow characters of their choice. After some demonstration sessions, the teacher should ask one of the extrovert children to take the part of a character and join in the dramatization with the teacher. Next, the teacher puts the students into situations that encourage a continuous flow of speech between two persons by providing them with some simple dialogues from the scripts that they have previously produced as their assignment. These warm-ups should give the children confidence in both manipulating the shadow characters and dubbing behind the curtain. During the performances, the teacher also creates opportunities for interaction between the audience and the children actually performing. In this way everybody will become actively engaged in the performance.

The Teacher's Role

The teacher, besides his/her role as an initiator of the plays and dialogues, gives the

necessary instructions about the shadow-theatre process through orientation in which the children will be training and experimenting widely. While the students are performing behind the curtain, carrying out the instructions, the teacher does not interrupt to correct mistakes and redirect them. Instead, s/he may use a tape recorder or a video camera to register the mistakes and weak points.

After the performance(s), the video or tape recordings are played back and comments are made by both the teacher and the children creating a friendly atmosphere of discussion. These comments center around two aspects: (1) the manner of presentation, including voice problems and the appropriate use of hand movements. (2) the use of words and structures meaningful to the situation, and the pronunciation as well.

To improve the weak points children can be given information about articulation, breathing , and voice projection and some practical exercises in these areas.

Sample Activities

Activity Type 1

Objective: To help the children understand that speech must be linked to the movement of their hands and also the bodily movement of shadow characters being animated.

Activity: The teacher chooses a series of simple dialogues in which it is important to talk and move the sticks naturally linking the shadow character's bodily movement with the speech.

For this type of activity the children are allowed some home preparation before the dramatization. They are given some open-ended incomplete scripts and asked to complete these dialogues in pairs however they wish. Thus, they will be presenting material some portion of which has been developed by themselves. This type of activity can be extended by assigning short stories for memorization. And the children may act out these stories via animation of shadow characters in front of the class The process will gradually move from simple and controlled dialogues, stories etc., toward complex and original scripts.

Activity Type 2

Objective: To place the students in a situation

where speech, debate, or discussion can be developed in a natural way, promoting participation by the whole group and also encouraging each child to communicate more easily with his/her peers.

Activity: Each student takes his/her turn getting behind the curtain to animate a chracter, speaking on a given or chosen subject for three minutes with one of his peers. At the end of the presentation, audiences may participate in the discussions either by asking the shadow characters questions or by answering their questions. But this activity should be under the control of the teacher so as not to interfere with the flow of speech and dialogue.

Such activities can be carried out after the children have already tackled speech in short controlled dialogues on aspects of everyday life.

Activity Type 3

Objective : To help children work in cooperation with others in the preparation of presentations to develop their own dialogues, making use of a given story an account of events that actually took place some time ago in their

neighbourhood etc.,

Activity: The child who missed seeing a bank robbery on a T.V program, wants an account of the events. So he/she interviews his/her peer who has actually watched the program, and who then gives his/her version of what happened. The story is first worked out in a discussion session. From this the two children who are to perform write a script.

The time allowed for preparation is 15 to 20 minutes for a simple dialogue; a longer play may have to be finished as homework. Once the dialogue has been written and corrected, the characters are ready for performance.

Conclusion

The use of shadow-theatre fulfills two main purposes in a language learning program (a) It encourages the students to use the language actually to communicate and (b) It gives them insight into the culture of the native speakers of the language. Furthermore it tries to reach these goals through an activity that is both rewarding and enjoyable for all concerned.

First, through the use of shadow- theatre children not only gain an understanding of grammatical structure in a context but also experience the dynamic, and productive use of the language to influence, control, entertain, and inform. Second, the reading and the production of plays develop relevant cultural activities through which a student's acquisition of the new language goes hand in hand with an increasing familiarity with the culture of the language. There are no limits to the variety of activities, which may be introduced through this shadow-theatre approach, since it is closely related to the talents and creativity of both the teacher and the children.

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The Stock characters in Shadow Theatre (Karagoz)
(by Metin AND)

We can not separate the performance and the characters of the shadow play from the social context and ethos of the Ottoman Empire in which it was generated and firmly located in its context. It was a large Empire spread over three continents; Europe, Asia and Africa. Its population consisted of several nationalities, religious and ethnic groups, all of which considered Istanbul as their capital.

Karagoz and Hacivat, the two main characters of the shadow plays, are also firmly rooted in the culture of Istanbul. Karagoz has a round face, his eye is boldly designed with a large black pupil, hence his name " Black-Eyed". In all the traditional dialogues between Karagoz and Hacivat, we find Hacivat always using flowing language full of prose and sophisticated terminology while Karagoz uses the the language of the common people. Hacivat can recite famous poems, he has a vast knowledge of music. This gives him a a scholastic type of importance. Karagoz on the other hand only thinks of making a living for himself and his family. Because he has no trade, he is usually unemployed and fails to provide for

his family, and he does not need Hacivat's superficial knowledge. Though he is stupid and easily taken in, he is constantly able to deceive Hacivat and others.

Hacivat is a reflective character with a pointed turned-up beard, each movement is well calculated and worked out beforehand. Karagoz on the contrary is impulsive and his character is shown by his speech and behaviour. Hacivat's reasoning limits his actions. Even though while on the screen, he makes few gestures with hands, Karagoz is more dynamic and energetic. Where Hacivat is always ready to accept the situation and maintain the statusquo, Karagoz is always eager to try out new ideas and constantly belongs to the opposition. He is either the scoffer of the middle-classes or a man of the people whose common sense finds something to criticise in the acts of authorities. Hacivat is always bound by the moral principles of the upper class and can easily adapt himself to these principles. He sometimes becomes instrumental in providing pleasure for the upper classes and is always worried that Karagoz's tactlessness would spoil these pleasures. Karagoz, the traditional symbol of the middle-class, on the other hand, finds that his tactless behaviour generally upsets most intrigues.

ANALYSIS of THE DATA COLLECTED FOR the ASSESSMENT of TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD SHADOW-THEATRE APPROACH IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The questionnaire is intended to assess the attitudes of the subjects (53 elementary level teachers teaching Turkish background pupils in the Netherlands) toward the use of shadow- theatre approach in Second Language teaching/learning process.

Below is the analysis of questionnaire results, showing the distribution of answers to each option of the questions:

1. Have you ever watched Hacivat- Karagoz shadow theatre ?

Yes: 45 No: 7 No Answer: 1

2. If you watched, where did you watch ?

In Turkey: 24 In the Netherlands: 7 Both : 14

3.Was the content of the play, you watched a

traditional one or a contemporary script ?

Traditioanal: 35 Both : 7

Contemporary : 5 No answer : 6

4. Can you understand the language in the traditional plays ?

Yes: 47 No: 19 No answer :1

5. Do you ever make use of shadow-theatre approach in your EFL/ESL classes ?

Yes: 33 No: 19 No answer: 1

6. When do you usually employ Hacivat- Karagoz as a teaching tool ?

16 subjects:

- when teaching units that are different in nature and in some project works

11 subjects:

- in some special days only (like christmas, religious holidays etc.,)

The rest of the subjects answered as:

- whenever I feel necessary.

- once or twice a year, just for a change to motivate the students

7. What is your aim in using Hacivat-Karagoz ?

16 subjects :

- to introduce a cultural element

11 subjects :

- to make pupils acquire speaking ability much better both in a second language and in the mother tongue -

10 subjects :

- both of the above

8. How do employ this approach in your classes ?

26 subjects:

- by dramatization of the stories from textbooks behind the curtain taking the role of either Hacivat or Karagoz and some other secondary characters.

4 subjects:

- by presenting dialogues of my own

16 subjects:

- making use of the dialogues written by children as hmework assignments.

7 Subjects:

- no answer

9. What could be the reason that Hacivat and Karagoz are not very popular and not used widely ?

2 subjects:

- because radio and television are available everywhere.

43 subjects:

- because Hacivat- Karagoz scripts are not contemporary.

3 subjects:

- both of the above

5 subjects:

- no answer

10 . " Using new materials in the production of shadow characters, introducing contemporary scripts, and making use of new techniques in animation would destroy the traditional features of Hacivat & Karagoz." Do you agree ?

Yes : 5 No : 45 Both: 2 No answer:1

11. If Hacivat and Karagoz plays are up dated giving them new functions in education and especially in Foreign and Second language learning processes, would it be possible to preserve this traditional element of the culture ?

Yes: 46 No :4 Both :2 No answer: 1

12. Would you like to use new scripts and contemporary stories in your Hacivat & Karagoz presentations ?

Yes : 48 No: 3 Both : 1 No answer : 1

13. Do you think Hacivat & Karagoz kind of shadow theatre is a suitable tool for teaching language to children ?

Yes: 52 No answer : 1

14. Do you think that Hacivat & Karagoz presentations would be of any help for shy students to make them join in the presentations ?

Yes: 48 No: 2 No answer :2

15. What would be the other things that the children can gain/ acquire through shadow theatre approach ?

- feeling of self-confidence
- fluency in speaking
- appreciation of cultural values
- team work spirit
-imaginative power
- tolerance and affection for others
- socialization and sympathy for artistic talents
- self-initiative
- observation and evaluation of other's work
- imitation ability

19. Would you attend a course/ a workshop on shadow theatre ?

Yes : 25 No : 23 No answer : 5

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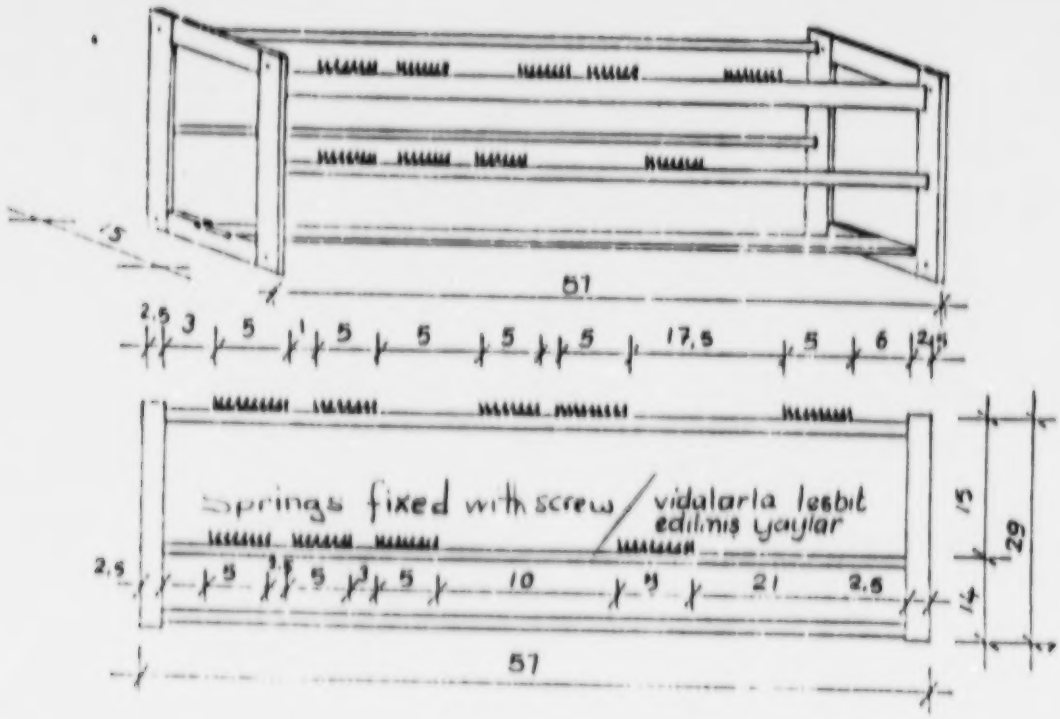

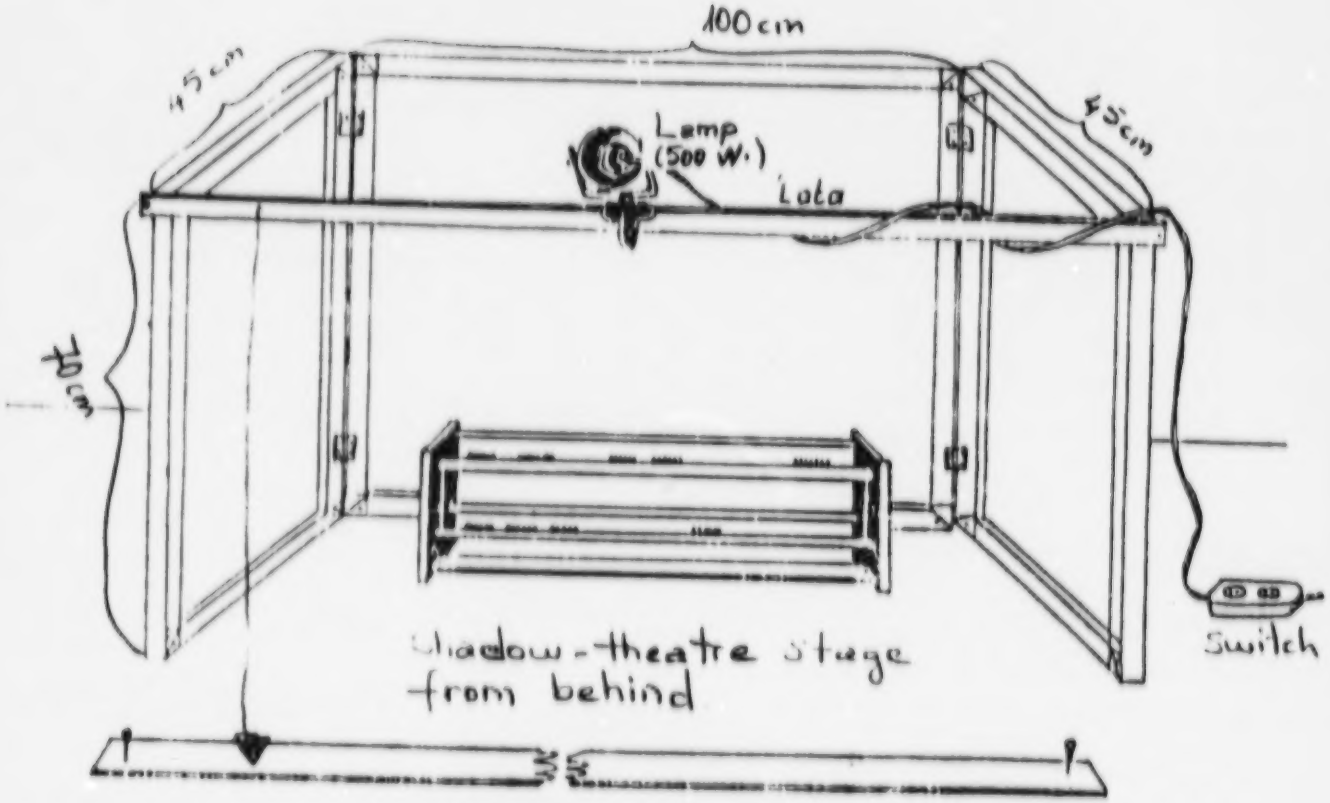

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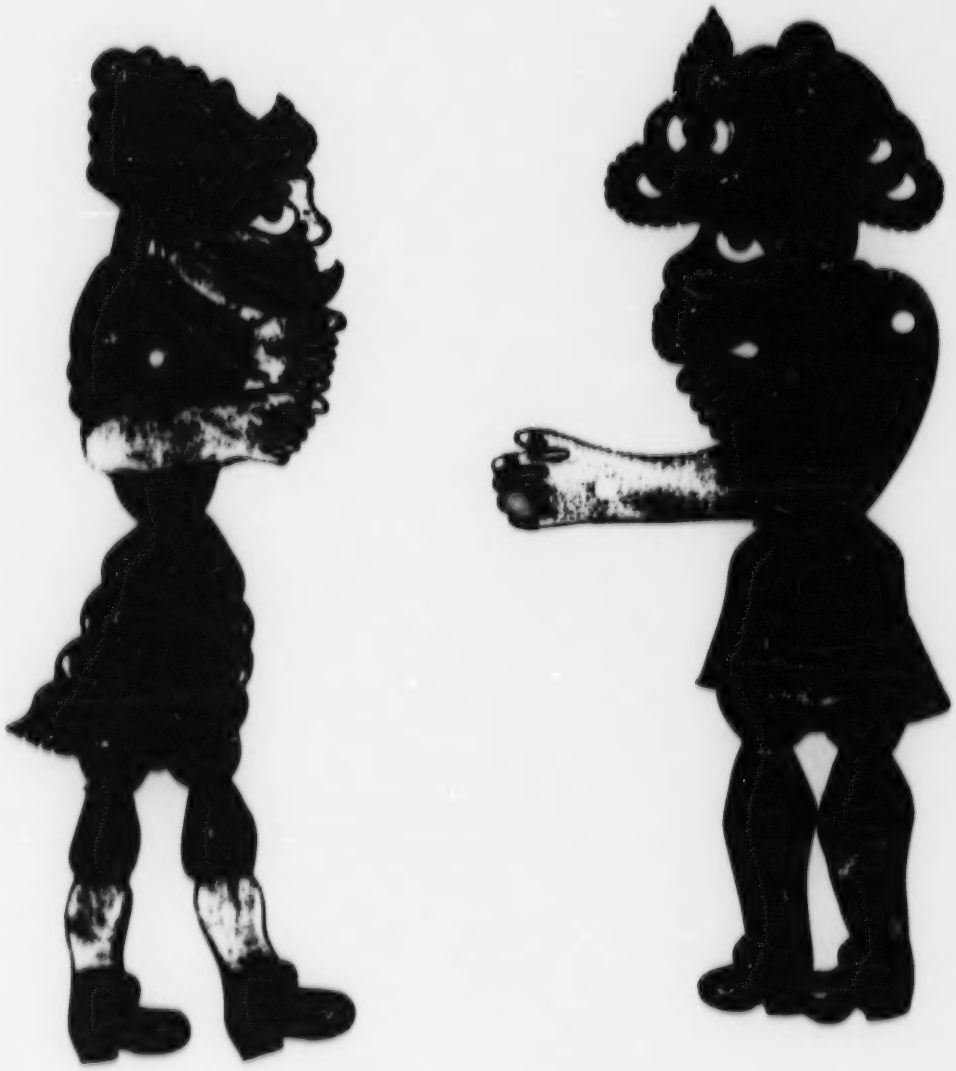
THE TWO MAIN CHARACTERS IN
TURKISH SHADOW-THEATRE



Adapted from Ugur GOKTAŞ (1992).